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Church Officers

A STUDY IN EFFICIENCY

By

FREDERICK A. AGAR

*Author of "Dead or Alive," "Help Those
Women," etc.*



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Preface

WE are on the threshold of great changes in this world of ours. What place shall the Church of Jesus Christ occupy in shaping the new conditions? Will it be a place of power and leadership or must it be one of obscurity and weakness? The answer will be found in what the Church shall do within the next few months and years.

If she catches the new vision of service, of sacrifice and of real brotherhood then the future will be secure. I am constantly accused of being an idealist. I plead guilty because in my idealism is an honest and humble attempt to follow the great Idealist, Christ the Son of God. In His life idealism was practical and every-day. Our idealism must likewise be practical and every-day as we plan for the future of the Church.

Three great words will cover the needs of the Church as she prepares to face the changing world conditions :

The first is Intercession. It must live in a new way in the lives of God's people.

The second is Service. A genuine participation by every child of God in the work of winning the world to Christ.

The third is Training. It must be a trained Church that will so serve as to produce all the fruitage of the intercessory spirit.

This little book undertakes to deal with the training of lay leaders for the tasks of the Church. As the United States army needed a Plattsburg for the training of her officers so does the Church need trained lay leaders to lead her forces to victory.

F. A. A.

New York City.

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I

DUTIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

LET my first words be a genuine and loving acknowledgment of the great debt due the host of men who have served God and the Church, often at real personal sacrifice and inconvenience, while they filled the various offices to which they were elected. Ofttimes many of them were unwilling incumbents who took the complaints and bore the burdens of official responsibility when no one else would do so. Quite often official responsibility has had very little recognition except in the joke column of the daily papers. This has been particularly true of the deacon. But a day of better things has dawned.

ONE OFFICE

Unless it is an emergency, and then only for imperative reasons, the rule of the church organization should be only one office for one person, and no more than one.

THE CHURCH SCHOOL

If a man is a good Bible School superintendent, doing that most important task adequately, there is not much time in his life to do any other church work except of an incidental character, for the work of such an office will fill practically all of the time which should be given to God for service. This rule will not apply where for instance the law of the communion constitutes a Bible School superintendent a member of the board of elders.

THE OFFICE

Frankly analyze its possibilities and responsibilities.

First, there must be ample communion with God so that vision and qualities of leadership may be developed in his own soul. Then there must be intercession for his assistants, the teaching force and the sick or weak of his department. The possibilities for developing the power of God in the life of the school by intercession are almost endless.

THE LESSON

Next, time must be given for study of the lesson, to master it. If the superintendent

conducts the teachers' meeting then more and more time is demanded for ample preparation. Some time should be given for a ministry to teachers and pupils in sickness or other troubles.

WIDENING THE VIEW

Now and again several days or a week must be set aside for attendance upon some institute or convention. There are technical books to read and church business meetings to attend, where Bible School matters are considered and related to the life of the whole Church. Unhurried conferences must be held with other workers and officers. After a serious study of conditions, which are in a constant state of change, plans must be made for advance lines of work. Then the program for the public conduct of the school session on Sunday must be carefully made and organist, choir leader and orchestra are to be consulted. Finally the teaching problem must be faced, teachers procured and trained, absentees replaced and followed up. Even if there is a capable and active assistant or two, the head officer must himself originate the plans, think out the details and assign to others the various parts of the many operations.

HELPING THE CHURCH

The superintendent or one of his assistants will find it very valuable personally to meet the new pupils for a few moments of private conversation. The names of all such newcomers should then be passed on to the leaders of the men's, women's or young people's work as the case may be.

PLANNING TO SUCCEED

To do these many things and to do them as befits the church of Christ is no simple task if failure is to be averted and success achieved for the church of the next generation. Even in a small school, no man or woman can make the most of such a great office without devoting to it most of the Lord's time in their life that should be given to His service. To attempt any other first class piece of work will be to fail in two directions. The church and the church officer must not fail.

THE LAY SPIRITUAL OFFICE

What sort of a task confronts the elder, steward, or deacon? ¹ First of all, he must fill the Scriptural qualifications in some

¹ Hereafter, these three terms are used interchangeably, as they refer to the same spiritual office in the life of the different communions of Christian people.

measure. He must be able to rule his own household. He should be a man of prayer and devotion in his home and in the church. He should be above pettiness. He must not love filthy lucre. He must possess both character and reputation. He must love the brethren.

WORSHIP

He should be regular in attendance upon the services of worship, first because his own soul needs such participation and then because he must seek to lead others to a similar participation inasmuch as it is essential to the maintenance of a good walk with God. From a very wide investigation I am quite prepared to say that a normal individual who is absent continuously from public worship will have no private devotional life of any power, if any at all. It will also be found that in the home there will be no family altar. The duty of seeing that the church pews are filled with worshippers belongs to the household and to the deacons as the lay leaders of that household. The minister is to fill the pulpit, not the pews.

OTHER DEMANDS

Concern for the weak in the household de-

volves upon the lay spiritual officer. Also a ministry for the sick and afflicted. There must be intercession made for all the needy ones. The duty of participating in personal evangelism is his. If this work of winning people to Christ is ever to permeate the life of the church it will be because the leaders show the way to the rest of the membership. Such work is of endless duration. Then there are business meetings to attend which will involve outside follow-up work and more intercession.

RELATIONS WITH PASTOR

In a peculiar way the deacons are to uphold the minister of the Word. They are to be his defenders, if defense is needed and possible. One of the most fruitful things they can do is to intercede with God for him and his ministry. Many a fine minister has retired from a pastorate with a broken heart and a measure of failure because the officers have criticized more than they have prayed for and worked with him.

THE DEACONS AT FAULT

Some time ago I was in a meeting of the official board of a certain church where the subject under discussion was how to get rid

of the pastor. Oh, yes, they said, he did not draw, that they did not like him personally and so on. Finally one man made a motion that a committee be appointed to secure his resignation. At that point I asked if I might question them. With their assent I first asked how many of the twelve present had prayed for their pastor once a day during the past month. Not one responded. How many had prayed once a week for him? Three assented. Then the simple suggestion was made, "to postpone the meeting a month and all agree to intercede with God for their minister at least once a day during that time." That occurred several years ago and the pastor is still with that church and these past several years have been the best in the long history of that organization. Almost unlimited time can be given to intercession for the pastor and for the members of their church and in particular for the non-participating part of their organization.

FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY

Furthermore the deacons must have concern for the members of the church, to see—not as a policeman but as an elder brother—that all participate in worship, in work, in giving. These are spiritual functions and

the health as well as the prosperity of the whole household depends upon every life possessing them. The giving life of any church is of prime importance because it is essential. The trustees should not handle the financial affairs of the church because the main solution of all money matters is found in spiritual relations rather than in business methods. Therefore the deacons should oversee the plans which are put into operation for the production of all financial results in the church.

EFFICIENCY AND SPIRITUALITY

It is an axiom of religion that the proper type of spiritual life will tolerate only efficient, up-to-date business methods in connection with all that is done. The truly spiritual life does all things decently and in order, owes no man anything, much less robs God or condones such robbery.

THE INCOMING MEMBER

Another large part of the deacon's work concerns the new member. The minister, from his standpoint as the under-shepherd of Christ helps all those who seek entrance into the church. But, as lay spiritual heads of the household of faith the elders are

peculiarly responsible for the nurture of the new-born souls and also for the proper development of all who unite with the church. For the babes in Christ there should be personal visitation, with help given to start a prayer life, to know how to read the Word of God, to begin the giving function and to take up some phase of personal service in the name of Christ. Yes, the minister in the past has dealt with all of those concerns, but there is needed a tremendous reënfacement of them all and it will come only when the lay leadership, from the same plane of life as the other lay members, lend their influence to the establishment of these fundamental necessities of an orderly and progressive walk with God. The church is weak to-day because the great part of this task has been cared for by the minister alone.

STATISTICS THAT ARE RELIABLE

Statistics reveal to us the startling fact that each year about half as many are lost from the church rolls by exclusion, by erasure, for non-participation or other similar causes as are added to the church by profession of faith. For instance a great communion adds eight per cent. in a year by profession, but in the same period drops about four

per cent. This, of course, does not include membership transfers. I am sure the cause is to be found in the past failure to induct newcomers into the fundamental habits of a walk with God as soon as they give themselves to Him.

THE OFFICE MAGNIFIED

The fact is clear that the church has so belittled the office of deacon by a failure to utilize it in a large way for a lay ministry that weak-kneed tasters of spiritual things were produced who soon fell away in some bitterness and folly after having made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. It is sometimes brought to my attention that this lay spiritual office is merely an empty honour, as the minister seldom or never consults the incumbents or has a meeting with them to consider the interests of the church. Such a condition is but the forerunner of trouble which will surely come sooner or later. It is the will both of God and the church that there be such officers. In the mind of God and the church therefore they have been appointed for a great purpose. To fulfill that purpose the minister must keep in close touch with them so that all may have a complete understanding of what is to be

done and how each may do his share in the accomplishment of the task. The pastor should arrange special meetings of the deacons for this purpose and none should ever be held without his knowledge.

On the other hand lay officers must ever remember that they do not employ or pay the pastor ; they are not his superior officers. As his assistants, they are to aid and encourage him in all his work and the minister is to aid and help them in all their services.

For the work of the church really to succeed there must be constant consultation and coöperation with one another in a frank, loving, brotherly spirit. Strife also must be avoided on both sides, and it is unwise to find fault or become easily offended when plans are being discussed or adjustments are considered. Sometimes it is the duty of these men to talk over with the minister some matters of personal conduct or professional action which if not corrected might injure all the interests concerned. Such consultation should be carried on in a spirit of love and meekness and not even the wives of the officers should know of the discussion.

Any man therefore who holds such an office in a church has a very large task on his hands, a task so large that all his time, tal-

ents and energy that belong to God for service can be used in fulfilling his duties in a thorough manner.

MONEY

The offices of treasurer and financial secretary must next be considered. In a small church of less than one hundred members one person can perhaps combine the two phases of the task, but in larger organizations not only should there be two treasurers, one each for current expense fund and beneficence, but several financial secretaries should also be elected. The financial secretaries are usually young people who do much of the detail bookkeeping and accounting.

In a small church with one treasurer the beneficence money should always be kept in a separate bank account and the church records should include a beneficence account entirely separate from the church expense or any other fund.

GOD THE OWNER

The financial work of the church must all be based upon the spiritual conception that an individual and his money are one and the same. If he belongs to God the money

in his hands must also belong to Him or else neither serve Him.

First of all, therefore, the task of keeping loving watch upon the spiritual life of the membership in this relation falls upon the financial administration. There is a direct and positive relation between worship and giving, therefore constant recourse will be had to the elders or stewards for follow-up work along such lines.

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING

All new members must be seen personally by some lay officer before being admitted to church membership. The best and only sure time to start a giving function is before and not after being received into the church. These officers should not do this work themselves if the board of deacons will undertake it. They, however, are responsible for its being done. If it does fall upon them they should have a committee composed of the most spiritual members in the church to help them perform the duty.

This particular service might well be assigned to the committee created and trained for the purpose of conducting the Every Member Canvass of the church. This committee performs many such spiritual tasks.

The troubles due to hurt feelings and misunderstandings which so frequently arise will come to this committee first or last and many of them will need personal visitation and attention. Keep the soul right with God and there will be less sensitiveness upon the part of the givers. Such a task should be committed to trained people.

STEWARDSHIP

Educational work should also be done in the life of the whole church for the promotion of stewardship. It must often find its dynamic in the financial leaders of the church.

THE EVIL OF SECRECY

Publicity is needed along many lines in connection with money relations in the church. Monthly reports of all monies received and paid out must be made to the membership. This is of great importance if people are to find encouragement in giving to God. Go into as much detail as is wise concerning the source of the income. At least once a quarter publish a list, by numbers, of all amounts paid in. Some churches even publish the names but in others that course would lead to dissension. Secrecy is

fatal and too much reticence as to the source of the income is a cloak that covers many a covetous soul, who is slowly dying of that awful sin.

SUBSCRIBER'S STATEMENTS

Quarterly statements must be sent to every subscriber in normal conditions, then no delinquent can feel aggrieved upon receiving such a notice. Of course, such a statement would not be sent where there was sickness or trouble.

This practice is based on the ground that the well-being of the life must always be cared for in love and then money will follow as a normal result under usual conditions. Life and love are the normal causes of giving, while money produced for God is the effect of the loving life.

EASY OF ACCESS

The treasurer and financial secretary should have a desk in some conspicuous place in the church and one of them should always be on hand whenever there is a worship service in the building. The money should be handled by them personally whenever possible.

THE NEW VIEW-POINT

There is a wonderful task in just building into people the spiritual conception of church finance. Money in the hands of God's people is life put into action on God's behalf. Such money is not a thing of gold or silver, it is a most wonderful part of a person who belongs to and serves God with all in the life.

DETAILS ARE IMPORTANT

All pledges should be made subject to cancellation upon notice to pastor or one of the financial officers. If the prosperity of a member increases the Lord desires the giving to be on that increased basis, therefore it is equally just to give ample opportunity to cancel or decrease a pledge when prosperity has vanished or diminished. Double pocket envelopes must be ordered and then distributed in ample time. Adequate records must be kept up to date. Modern appliances must be provided. Money should be dispersed with due regularity. The financial secretary should make out the vouchers and enter them up properly in the records, then pass them on to the treasurer who will sign and pay them out. Any one handling the funds of other people should give bonds in due amounts. This rule is applicable to

church life just as much as it is to the banking business. It is absolutely no reflection upon the honesty of any one.

PAID WORKERS

Many churches to-day employ one or more paid workers to care for much of the work outlined here, but a church treasurer who does not connect his own ministry of life with all the financial affairs of his office is missing a great opportunity for genuine spiritual service. There are cases where the very fact that a paid church worker is dealing with a member produces a constant source of irritation without the worker being in the least to blame. A paid worker may well be used in the office work, but voluntary lay workers are most effective in personal approach to the contributors.

BEGGING

Begging in the church life for funds to carry on the work must be avoided. The spirit of loving and intelligent giving must always be cultivated and encouraged.

THE WHOLE IN VIEW

It is wise to make the treasurer and financial secretary *ex officio* members of the

board of deacons, as the work of the two officials will constantly touch the same channels of expression in the life of the membership. But in such a case the financial officers should not be counted as deacons in any plan of work laid out for the latter officers.

HELPING SICK SOULS

Mechanical work will always be secondary to a ministry to life. And what a ministry there is to be exercised in behalf of the non-giver, the under-payer, the delinquent! It will tax the soul of the individual who ministers to such people. The mite giver on the other hand who has poverty of coin but great love and richness of soul will bring joy and blessing to the worker. It was one of this last sort of givers who ministered to our Lord's satisfaction when she dropped into the treasury her two mites.

SPIRITUAL EQUIVALENTS

The whole task of financing the enterprise of Christ must be put upon a just basis. That will mean upon a spiritual basis. For all money given out of the life there must be an adequate spiritual equivalent. We must stop "money raising" and begin to teach

and practice giving from the standpoint of our trusteeship for God.

A BACKBONE NEEDED

The church treasurer must have a backbone as well as a business head and a spiritual life, for he will sometimes be asked to do things with money contributed for a given purpose that were not contemplated by the donors. Trust funds can be used only for the specific purpose for which they are given. Civil courts have ruled that even the donor cannot lightly change that purpose after the money has passed out of his possession into the hands of a fiduciary.

THE BIGNESS OF THE TASK

Even a cursory examination of the duties of the treasurer and financial secretary make it plain that any one properly filling either office has on his hands a great worth-while task and one that needs all of the time at the disposal of the individual. The whole future of the church can be helped or hindered according as the financial administration is good or bad.

THE DEACONESS

The work of the deaconess will parallel

that of the deacon, but it will, of course, specifically relate itself to women and children and the homes of the whole parish membership. This statement does not apply in particular to a professional order of women but to the lay women in churches where there is no such order of deaconesses.

II

DUTIES AND QUALIFICATIONS (Continued)

THE WOMEN'S UNION

LET us next consider the duties of the president of the women's organized work in the local church.

If possible there should be one organized women's group in the local church with a president at the head of the organization. Then according to interests and activities the women should be arranged into smaller departments or groups for specified purposes such as Mission Study, Social Life, Social Hygiene, Aid Work, Literary Circle, Young Women's League, Personal Workers and Intercessors, a Mothers' Band and so on. There is no longer any excuse whatever for a separate Aid Society and Mission Circle, each organized without relation to the other. Such a practice is divisive and limiting. Each of these special groups should have a vice-president whose duties in connection with her department should parallel those of the president of the whole Women's Union.

NON-PARTICIPATING WOMEN

The president and vice-presidents should have a complete list of all the women and girls of the church. It will be found that less than one-third are connected with the organized women's work of the church. Visitation for cultivation and enlistment should be planned and carried out. Some of this work must be done by the officers, the remainder can be parcelled out to interested women. But a close check needs to be kept upon it by the leaders. As soon as a woman becomes an attendant upon any meeting she must be given something to do or she will disappear again very promptly. A survey of the church field must therefore be made in order to have in hand some worth-while tasks to be done. These tasks are multitudinous, but in the past the church has not really served the community and the world in any adequate way.

COÖPERATION

There is the task of correlating the work of all the vice-presidents and in turn each vice-president must personally cultivate her group and seek to have it enlarged. A plan for the weekly meeting of the group must be made by each vice-president and a program

must be made by the president for that most important monthly meeting when reports from each interest and a varied mission presentation are always to be made to as many women as can possibly be gathered together. Refreshments should be served without charge, the expense for them being met out of the budget furnished the women for that purpose by the whole church.

RELATING OUTSIDE CAUSES

There are civic, philanthropic and federated activities and organizations to be kept in mind and a worker in any such outside field should have the backing of the women's organization as she does that piece of work. In fact the Women's Union should see to it that a delegated representative should be attached to all such betterment work. It is part of the Kingdom enterprise and therefore part of the church responsibility. Federations are to be promoted in order to do certain big things with the aid of workers from other churches which no one church could do alone. Then we have the poor with us always and they need our ministry not as a matter of charity but of love. This is a ministry in which the women are peculiarly strong.

VARIED ACTIVITIES

Every church of Jesus Christ will have a women's mission circle no matter what else it may lack. This circle of women are potential in all the life of the organization.

Mission study groups must be planned and teachers trained and assigned. There are the shut-ins with their pathetic need of love and comfort. The united church council must be attended and the women put into any empty spots in the church work. There is a great need of help in homes in order to create such conditions as will further the progress of a Christian democracy. This work will reveal some needs which only women can fill. Prayer lists must be made up and given out and then kept track of. Personal evangelism must be programmed and carried out. Where neighbouring schoolhouses are to be visited, teams must be made up and automobiles secured for them to travel in to the place of meeting. Even the executive work connected with this big task will occupy the time of the leaders to the exclusion of any other worth-while church tasks. We must encourage church officers to expect to do a worth-while task or the church will fail properly to serve the world.

These officers must be women of prayer, of faith, of vision and of such qualities of personality and character that their leadership will be effective. They must be missionary in spirit and in action. Such church officers related to the women's organized work should hold no other office in the church life.

TRUSTEE

Trustees must be appointed by a church organization to comply with the legal requirements of the various states. They are also elected to hold in trust the property interests of the organization and are subject to the instructions of the body that appointed them. In some communions they are charged by the law of the body with the care of the church finances. I am persuaded, however, that the finances of the church life or beneficence do not rightly belong in their hands, but should be handled by the treasurer and deacons or a special finance committee. Trustees are often not members of the church, or if members are usually chosen for their standing in the business world. They do not know the intimate spiritual workings of the organization and they are very likely to take a worldly, monetary and business view-point of what must be done.

MAKE THEM DEACONS

Trustees who are church members and fitted to cope with the spiritual problems involved in church finances may very well be added to the board of deacons. The average church is usually short of a sufficient number of deacons to do properly the needed work. In a modern church a deacon should be appointed for every sixty members. Trustees are valuable to the organization because their business capacity commends the credit of the organization to the community in which the property exists and a church should appreciate good credit as much as any other enterprise in the place.

CLERK

The clerk of the church should keep the minutes of all business sessions of the organization. A loose leaf book should be provided for that purpose. A record of the membership should also be kept by him in which is entered the name of every member received, and all who are dismissed will have that fact with date entered against the name. Many churches keep such record upon an individual card in a handy filing cabinet. Both may be done, as the book can then be kept for the personal use of the officer and

the cards used for general purposes. Some religious bodies have official groups which are obliged to keep a record of their transactions. In such cases the clerk of the session or whatever the official group may be called can well be the clerk of the church.

NON-RESIDENT MEMBERS

Non-resident members will be corresponded with on behalf of the church. They will be urged to coöperate in the work of the body they belong to.

Where the membership is large and the list of non-residents is also correspondingly large one or more assistant clerks should be appointed. Such an assistant is sometimes called the corresponding clerk or secretary or the non-resident secretary.

IMPORTANT RECORDS

In some communions the minister is charged with the duty of keeping the vital statistics of the parish. It is sometimes brought to my attention that the records are poorly kept. Parish records that contain vital statistics are most important and must not be neglected. The lay officers will help the clergyman where necessary. It will be a kindly act of reciprocity, for very often it is

only by the aid of the minister that the clerk's records have been kept in any usable shape.

CORRECT ADDRESSES

In coöperation with the pastor the addresses will be constantly checked over by holding an enrollment Sunday where any member notes on a prepared card any change of address known to them.

A VITAL MATTER

In dismissing members to other churches a record will be sent telling the church to which those members are going of their worship habits. Also what office or position of usefulness they have occupied. This is in order that the receiving church may be able properly to place them in their new relation and in that vital hour of a new relationship seek to secure for them a proper start along needed lines. In the past a blank form of letter has often been used which made it impossible to tell the truth, thus working injury both to the organization and to the member. The letter must never be given to the person but be sent always to the pastor of the receiving church. A suggested form of letter is shown here.

The Church,
 Truth City, Missouri, 19...
 JOHN HONEST, *Pastor.*

LETTER OF DISMISSION

To the Church,

Christian Salutation :

M..... united with this church by on
 19... and at own request is now
 dismissed from our fellowship to unite with you.

For the purpose of aiding you to properly establish
 in the life of your church the following
 record of walk with us is appended.

Worship A.M. Eve. Prayer Meeting....
 S. S..... W Y. P.

Gives Church Regularly Irregularly....

Not at all of record :

Gives Missions Regularly..... Irregularly

Not at all of record :

Works...Sunday Worship... S. S... W... Y. P....

Offices Held

Chairman Board of Elders

.....

..... Church Clerk.

This letter is to be sent to pastor or clerk of church where dismissed member expects to go. It is void after six months from date.

A HOMELIKE FEATURE

In a modern church of which I know where the membership is small there are clerks who keep track of the birthdays of members and then in the prayer life they are remembered by the pastor. In larger churches some department of the church does a similar service. It is such homelike features that help to make the household of faith real.

DETAILS

When a church has set a definite membership goal to be reached within a given period the clerk issues from time to time official bulletins to keep the membership informed as to the progress being made towards the goal. The clerk should always be a member of the united church committee sometimes known as the advisory council or pastor's cabinet.

A LARGE TASK

Even a cursory examination of the duties of a clerk will reveal the fact that it is a large

task if properly handled. The clerk of the church should not, therefore, hold any other office in the body but should do this important work with his total powers. The clerk besides having the qualifications needed by the deacons should possess geniality and approachability. A knowledge of stenography is a great assistance. He needs to be systematic in the handling of the clerical details. Promptness is also an asset. The clerk will refuse to sign a letter of dismissal that is not an honest statement of fact, but on the other hand all statements made in such letters should be loving in spirit, brotherly in their intentions but true.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PRESIDENT

The president of the Young People's Society must be elected by the church upon nomination by the Society. The Young People's Society is the church at work for young people by means of its young people. By following this practice the office is recognized by and is responsible to the whole church as well as the part called the Society. It is a most important office, for the church of the succeeding decade is gathered within the membership of the young people's department.

The president should have a full list of all young people in the life of the church in order that all may be adequately and continuously cultivated. Young people are in the formative period of their lives and therefore need constant supervision or they will drift from the church in large numbers. This follow-up work is a large task in itself and must be done under the direction of the officers.

SOCIAL LIFE

Social life must be provided within the life of the church or else the young people may be lost to the organization. Laughter began in the life long before conscious prayer, but to produce the best type of life both must be thoroughly cultivated. Social life is fundamental and is as much a part of normal living as any phase of life. If the church does not provide it the world will and the young people will go where it is to be found. The money for such necessary social activities should be provided by the church treasury so that no money-charging socials shall mar the life of the church.

DOING THEIR PART

Expressional activities must be sought out

and assigned. The objective will be to furnish the young people as many opportunities as possible to tell others of Christ by word of mouth or by loving deeds of helpfulness and ministry. Such activities are too numerous to mention here in any detail. The world around the church is still waiting for a real expression of our Saviour's life and ministry. Missionary dramas should be given in the church and neighbourhood without any money seeking being connected with the presentation.

DEVOTIONAL LIFE

The devotional life of the young people needs to be developed. Habits of Bible reading, unselfish service and money-giving must be formed if the worship life is to be maintained on a worth-while plane. Mission study should be made popular and for that purpose should be combined with social life. The world vision is essential in developing Christian experience. The Sunday night gospel service needs the support of the young people and the pastor should be made to feel that the young people stand with him in that very important phase of church life.

JUNIOR BOARD OF DEACONS

A selected group of young people should be in training for all the important offices of the church, just as in the theatrical profession there is always an understudy for each important part. In the business world there are men in training for the posts of importance. A junior board of deacons is an absolute necessity if trained candidates are to be on hand in the hour of future need. The pastor is to be the teacher in all such training work.

THE NEWCOMER

The cultivation of the stranger is of prime importance. The newcomer must be made to feel at home. There are young people's societies which see that comfortable and safe boarding places are known and then the list is given to a newcomer. Work or business opportunities are sought out for those needing them. The saloon used to do such work and found it paid, and hence the church can, from its much higher plane, seek to do service in such things. Brotherhood in Christ is meant to be a most wonderful thing. Church members are called primarily to serve, not to enjoy ; but real enjoyment will come when adequate service has been rendered others.

LEADERSHIP

These tasks will not even be attempted without adequate leadership and the president of the society is the leader chosen to see that the work is at hand and that the forces are assigned to the tasks and then kept at them till done. This officer should be a member of the church united committee.

When all these things have been thought about, planned out and assigned to committees and individuals, the task of keeping track of them, interceding with God for the various workers and causes and at the same time preserving a calm and confident spirit will be as much as any normal life can attempt; no other office should be held; but all that the life possesses be given to God for the purposes of the one office he holds.

CHURCH MUSIC

The chorister and organist are too often merely paid servants of the church. They should be made to feel that they are a most important part of the household of faith. My plea is that they may be so related to the great objectives of the church that the spiritual ends in view may become the end for which they strive. The artistic end is not sufficient in a house of God but the

artistic need never be sacrificed in any effort to attain a real spiritual end.

THEIR WORK RELATED

Some churches now request the presence of the chorister at the officers' meetings so that the whole work of the whole church may be spread out before all who are to have a leading part in the bringing of the enterprise to a successful conclusion. Proper coöperation is thus assured throughout all departments and the special work under the direction of the song and musical leaders is related to all the worship life of the organization. The employment of the choir solely for entertainment or to add to the selfish enjoyment of the congregation is a misuse of a branch of the church organization intended for worship. To minister with organ and song so that the lifting power of the service renders easier the approach to God is a very noble ministry and a proper use of one of God's most wonderful gifts. All choirs during their period of service in the house of God should use some simple and uniform covering over their usual garments. Improper provision for the music and song needs of subsidiary church meetings has had a great deal to do with their failure in many

cases where such meetings have become a problem as in the mid-week prayer service. Wherever possible the organist and chorister should not only be technically competent but they should be of high character and Christian profession. If sacrifice must be made let it be of the former rather than the latter.

THE JANITOR

The superintendent of the building or janitor as he is often called is an important member of the official family in the church. If he becomes [merely a hired man working for wages the church needs a new janitor or a reconstruction of its ideas. If he is made to feel that his task properly and lovingly performed can make for spiritual progress, then the church that harbours him is to be congratulated. Good air can help mightily to vitalize a service of worship, but on the other hand many promising services of worship are nipped in the bud because the air in the house is stale, too hot or too cold.

CLEANLINESS AND NEATNESS

If there is one place that should be clean and neat both inside and outside it is the house of God. Many church properties are a disgrace to the membership. Broken

glass, débris blown into corners, rank weeds, uncut and untrimmed grass plots are a few of the things too often seen on the outside of church buildings. The world often judges the love of God's people by the care given to the property. Perhaps the janitor is not to blame. In many cases a niggardly board of trustees will not provide money enough properly to take care of the land around the church building.

A REAL DOORKEEPER

There is a janitor who when first entering the house of worship to prepare it for the services of the day always kneels to pray that God's blessing may be upon the people who come to worship and upon the minister who conducts the service. Needless to say there is no dust around that house; the air has been changed during the intervals between meetings and the thermometer is not allowed to get far below or above sixty-six degrees. That man loves the house of God and naturally enough both minister and people love "the doorkeeper in the house of the Lord."

THE HEAD USHER

The head usher holds a place of great importance in the life of the church. "Oh, he

renders just a piece of mechanical service," I heard some one say. Not so, if he is properly filling his place.

To him and his assistants comes the first touch with the life of the worshipper as he enters the house of God. The welcome given a faithful member puts just the needed homelike touch upon his entrance. In case of an irregular attendant the concern of the usher at having missed him at previous services may make easy a change to regular attendance.

THE STRANGER

When a stranger enters he can be made to feel that it is the Father's house and all within are brethren. The handling of strangers is an art. The competent usher also elicits much valuable information. He learns for example that a member of the family is absent or sick and sees to it that some word about the case reaches the agencies of the church ministering to the household. A bereaved one has found it hard to come back into the gaze of the public, but the head usher or his assistant can help to pass over that period when the life shrinks from contact with others. Such service is a real ministry.

THE TARDY

The late comers we have with us always, and to restrain them from disturbing the service is essential. So the ushers must care for them while song, prayer or reading is in progress. Then they must be seated so as not to spoil the continuity of the service. A plan is therefore made with the organist and minister whereby their entrance is robbed of its disturbing elements as nearly as possible.

The collectors must be trained so that the worship of giving may be made real and easy. Ushers can help maintain the dignity of the house of God and the reverent attitude of the worshippers.

Many small churches consider that they have no need of ushers, but this is a serious misapprehension. Every household should have a host to welcome those who enter it.

These tasks are not trivial. To promote order, reverence, unity in the house of our Lord is to share with Him His ministry to a needy world.

A salesman, bank cashier or teller, or any man accustomed to dealing with the public is a splendid recruit for this office especially when to those qualities he adds a genuine love for his fellow man in the name of Christ.

III

SELECTION AND TRAINING

THE church was designed by its great originator and organizer to train disciples so that every follower of His might serve the world in His name. It has trained some who have served in the world in a splendid way. But the rank and file of the membership have not been trained nor have they served. Inasmuch as the laymen have controlled and officered the church of the past, to them must fall a share of this failure. In order to fulfill the mission of the church in the immediate future plans are being made in many local churches for trained lay leaders.

A DIVINE ORGANIZATION

In the selection of officers for the most important organization in the world, the church of Jesus Christ, the duties of the office and the needed qualifications for fulfilling those duties must steadfastly be kept in mind.

DEACONS, ELDERS, OR STEWARDS

The selection of these officers should not be left to the whim of some individual in a congregational meeting. Nor should some sentimental chap be given a chance to nominate Brother Blank because "he is such a good man." It often turns out that he is good-for-nothing, but to fill an unoccupied space. He can hold only the title, but he is literally unfitted for the work needing to be done in the office he has taken. That is a calamity to the organization because such men are hard to get rid of under past procedures. To dispossess him is to make him and his friends angry. I constantly hear of men being elected to a church office because they were "some one's friend" and had never held office before so should be given one or else "he is liable to get mad and leave."

A NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The proper method of selecting church officers is by means of a nominating committee. Appoint in open meeting a carefully selected committee to report a week or more later. In a spirit of prayer and with God's ends in view let them scan very thoroughly the personnel of the organization and agree upon a name to present to the church.

Past experience, devotion, physical fitness and ability to be on hand whenever needed should all be given due weight.

THE CALL OF GOD

When chosen for an office in the church it should generally be considered that the call of the church is the call of the Master to serve Him. God's call is not to be lightly declined by any one. Where there has been a board of junior deacons the choice is greatly simplified because there is material of a developed character to choose from. Great care should then be exercised in the selection of the members of the board of junior deacons. The same prayerful care ought to attend the selection of the members of the board of deaconesses.

A LIMITED TERM

The selection should be for a limited term of from three to five years' duration. To elect for life is to tie the hands of the church in a most calamitous manner. It is also putting a premium upon incompetency and slackness. There is no Scriptural authority for the ordination of deacons nor is there any Biblical reason why it should not be done. Experience, however, has proven that

it often fails to produce an efficient officer because the individual's incumbency is thus rendered permanent whether he serves effectively or not. The church of the immediate future must be an efficient organization and for that end it is imperative that it have efficient officers.

A BROADER VIEW-POINT

At the end of his term the deacon should be compelled to retire for one year, but is eligible for reelection at the end of the year of retirement. If really competent he can then be put back into office. There are two valuable considerations in such a procedure. On the one hand if a mistake has been made in his selection its repetition is prevented without any harmful results. On the other hand if the man is worthy of the great office, it will be a most beneficial and broadening experience *to such a man* to sit once again in the congregation and get afresh the viewpoints of that large unofficial group upon many questions. A year later when he goes back into official relationships it will be with a wider and more useful experience.

NOT APPLICABLE TO OTHERS

This procedure does not apply to the other

lay officers who are elected annually and who work from a different point of view in relation to the actual management of church affairs. It is essential in church life to avoid the spirit of "a boss" or group in control. The spirit of equality and brotherhood must be built up. A church boss is a calamity for all concerned. It must be said, however, that when the efficiency of any officer has departed that officer should be given honour in some Christlike way, but he should be immediately retired. The church and its cause are above any man or set of men.

A TECHNICAL TASK

The office of deacon is a technical one. There are specific things of great and far-reaching importance to be done. Tasks to be done for people and with people if the organization is to fulfill its God-appointed place.

Churches often have in this office men of fine Christian character. But character alone is not sufficient. If you are in need of a surgeon for a difficulty in the physical life you seek a man with a double qualification, character plus technical skill. All the character in the world will not produce a good opera-

tion if the needed training and experience are lacking.

TRAINED MEN

Elders, stewards and deacons should therefore be given adequate training for the work they are to do. The logical person to train them is the pastor. Sometimes when this is said a derisive laugh is heard, induced I suppose by the fact that in some cases these officers treat and consider the pastor as their hired man. While that may still be true in some backward parts of the church life, it is an idea that is rapidly being displaced by the correct position, that the minister is by office, training and experience the leader and teacher of all the forces in the church. Actual processes of training and conference conducted by a pastor with his officers would soon eliminate the last vestige of such an outworn idea.

OUTSIDE COÖPERATION

Perhaps a very young pastor, or an old one, might feel embarrassed to conduct such work. If so, it could be put in charge of a neighbouring pastor or some general worker of the communion concerned.

Eight or ten meetings in the course of a

year would be sufficient if a period of two hours was allotted each session. A large amount of the work must be done with the assurance that the whole group would be present. Then some of the teaching must be given personally.

A GOOD EXAMPLE

For instance, a certain pastor had a board of officers whom he desired to train for personal service in evangelism. Picking out one man who seemed most earnest and apt he took him with him while he dealt with an enquirer. This first time the lay officer was an interested spectator. A few days later the pastor took the man on another such errand. This time the deacon was called on to pray after the enquirer had given himself to God. The third time as they entered the home together the pastor said to his officer, "Now I want you to deal with this case." The man was successful in winning a decision from the enquirer. Another deacon was then assigned to go with the experienced one, while the pastor started out with a third man in his company. At the end of a year seven out of eight deacons had been trained for such service. Then the deacons undertook to put the same processes at work in the re-

mainder of the membership. Tedious work ! yes, but quite worth while in the long run. Some people are not fitted by temperament for such service, but other work can be found for the few of whom that is true.

THE RIGHT PLACE TO BEGIN

The only hope of making a working church is to begin at the top, for it is quite true that what the officers will not do very few of the rank and file will do. Leadership is needed. If this world is to be told speedily and effectively of Jesus and led to Him it will be because of the enlistment and training of lay workers. The professional ministry cannot do all the work ; it would be a calamity if they could and did do it. We need to do this work out of love for Christ, but in addition it needs to be done for the spiritual enrichment of the lives of church officer and member.

AN EXPERIENCE

A church officer recently went into a home to present Christ to a fellow man. It was the first time he ever had attempted such a task. The man he went to see was ugly about it at first and tried to create an argument. But the church officer got down on

his knees at that point and began to pray. He won the man with the help of God. At the church service that night the new convert came forward to give his testimony before the congregation. After his simple statement had been made he paused for a full minute, then raising his arm he pointed at the church officer and said, "I am here tonight with Christ because of what that man did for my soul this afternoon." "Ah," said the official, "in my life there have been joy and success but never such joy or such a feeling of victory as when that man pointed his finger at me and said that he was safe because of what I had done in God's name for his soul." There is no other experience like it in all the world.

THE BIBLE

These officers need to know some simple things about the Bible so that they can help new-born souls to find the milk of the Word. They must know where to find the fundamental truths about the will of God concerning worship, work and giving.

A PRAYER LIFE

They need to know the structure of the prayer our Lord gave His disciples so that

they can teach converts what Christ intended when He sought to build up a prayer life in His disciples. They should be able to teach those eager new-born souls how it is possible potentially to spend ten minutes each day in China or Japan or in the slums of an American city when by prayer we set free great forces of God in the areas and personalities set before Him in intercession.

INTERCESSION

This has been a lost power in many a life and church. There are signs of its revival and that revival of intercession can be mightily hastened when we train the lay spiritual leaders in it first of all. The place of prayer in the home must be made plain and every such officer should speedily establish a family altar and have a blessing before food is partaken of at the meal table. A pastor recently went to every home of his church officers at an early morning hour to help them start this privilege and it is a new church in its spiritual power as a result.

STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship is a lost grace in many a church officer's life. Many do not give at all and the idea of giving the first fruits of

all increase to God is not thought of. Some give irregularly with the idea that it is a volitional act. They must be taught that to be a good steward of the manifold mercies of God is not voluntary but mandatory. The love of the Father and the will of the Owner of all things make it so.

AN ADEQUATE PRICE

If the love of God is to mean great things in a life it will be because a great price has been paid to reveal it. A thing is worth about what it costs you. Every church officer must learn this and experience it. The rank and file of the church will never practice stewardship until the lay leaders set them the example and furthermore see to it that every entrant into membership in their organization understands the requirements of God and begins the practice *before* being admitted to membership in the church.

THE PULPIT

The ministry must continue to preach in no uncertain way upon this duty as it has in the past. It is quite true that the ministry in general has both practiced and preached stewardship in a fine way. However, a gen-

eral alone can never win a battle. Victory comes when the rank and file, properly led, carry out the plans of the leaders.

THE FUNDAMENTALS

Many of the great basic truths of Christian living must be built into the daily life just as a good digestion is the result of ceaseless watching and unremitting regulation in the early years of life. Habits are the result of long effort, not of a spasm. A great prayer life cannot be picked up in a day. An adequate spirit of missions and giving, in such measure as to glorify God, are both the result of careful teaching and patient practice, with love as the leading star. So the lay leaders must be trained in all these essentials in order that they in turn may train the church membership

TRADITION

I am fully aware of the chorus of objections that will arise to this simple plan. So let us consider some of them.

OBJECTION ONE

"The church has never done things that way." Neither have most of us lived as citi-

zens of America in war times, but we seem able to accommodate ourselves to many things we have never done before. The same people are in the church and can be led to change past conditions under proper leadership.

OBJECTION TWO

“Any real attempt to raise the standard of church life will be resented by many and will lead to internal strife.” The people of America have proven that the contrary is true. Several million men have a new standard of obligation to America in the army. Their mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, wives, and sweethearts have a new standard of patriotism in the giving up of loved ones for their country. It has not caused internal strife. We never have been as united as at the present time. Many of the same people are in the church and all that is needed is to show them that the highest cause in all the world has a need that is positive and present, and they will unite as never before to do the needed thing in a great way. If our church members are of another *stripe* it is because of former laxity and we must at once undertake to save them from the errors of the past. God’s require-

ments are fundamental and in order to fulfill them love must rule first, then patience and finally persistent love.

It is a task to change the habits of a spoiled child, a terrible task, but nevertheless it must be done if we would save the child from himself.

OBJECTION THREE

"Lay leaders in general have not time enough to give to the church work in order to do what you are planning for them." Well, let us carefully examine the time problem.

THE TIME ELEMENT

Every one has a week of one hundred and sixty-eight hours. First of all God should have the first fruitage of all increase in those hours in our lives. He should have twenty-four hours of that number set apart for His uses. Then fifty-six hours can be allotted to sleep and rest. Fifty hours a week are given to work and then thirty-eight hours are left for meals, going to and from work, exercise, pleasure and self. In many cases the work hours in a week only number forty-four, but farm life in the country may seem to require even more than the fifty. But on the farm

less time is spent for meals, outdoor exercise and pleasure.

A PLANNED LIFE

Most lives are not systematized and no organization of time has been attempted, consequently there is a loss of habit, of accomplishment and of a sense of achievement. We need to have a plan for our day and also for the use we shall make of our Lord's part of each week.

THE LORD'S TIME

What shall be done with the twenty-four hours set apart for God's uses? First count up the worship and work hours on the Lord's day spent in the church or its service outside. Say, five hours. An hour a day for prayer, Bible study, meditation and the family altar would consume seven hours more. Many a man who spends an hour twice a day on the train or street car going to and from work can revolutionize his spiritual processes as well as his impact upon the world by using some of that time for spiritual ends. I know men who have done this for years and they have climbed up the ladder of business success, while they

plodded heavenward. No man can live God's life on the hit or miss plan. That plan ultimately becomes all miss. Then comes the mid-week meeting and some official church gatherings that will occupy three more hours a week. Nine hours are left to use in various ways for God and His church. Intercession, personal visitation upon the sick and afflicted, personal evangelism, social service work, mission study or Bible study, lay team evangelism and a host of other opportunities are before the life by which we can serve our fellow men.

IDEALISM

"Oh, you are a blind idealist," is the response of many. I may be an idealist but I am not blind for I see tens of thousands of men in a year and know what they do day by day with their time and energy. And in addition I know myself. "Then you are a foolish theorist." This is not a theory for I know and you know that literally thousands of men are letter perfect in the ritual of a lodge which covers fifty pages or more and took many hours to commit to memory. While doing it they did not say to any one, "No, I cannot do it because my time belongs to my employer." They did their work and

learned the ritual at the same time. With such people it is solely a question which things will be done in the time at the disposal of the life. Shall the lodge or the card table be cultivated or shall the church and God be served? If the former is chosen an altogether secondary thing is being done instead of a first thing. The lodge may not be wrong in itself, but when it excludes a higher and divine organization from a proper share of time it becomes a wrong in that life. It may be a choice between what is good and what is best. In such a case it is perilous and foolish to choose the good. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve."

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Many lay officers want to do secondary things because they love such things best. Education and training are largely responsible for our habits. The periods of training and education that count for most come when we are young in the Christian life and experience, but the church of the past neither trained nor educated its new-born children in any thorough way. Like Topsy they were allowed to grow up anyhow. Somehow, in spite of this, many Christians to-day are real stewards of time, energy and talents as well

as of possessions. What some do all could do if properly trained and educated.

VARIETY

We need to remember that change of occupation is the greatest physical energizer next to sleep in the normal conditions of life. Energy does not come from idleness or slothfulness. Variety is the spice of life, hence when we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness all the other needed things are added unto us in heavenly proportions. We have time enough to do all that God wants us to do for Him if we will use it.

THE WILL TO DO

When we set ourselves to do a thing how easily it is done. Witness the present daylight saving plan which puts us all to bed an hour earlier and gets us up at an hour undreamed of a few months ago.

THE MINISTER

Before ending this discussion about the selection and training of the deacons we need to face the fact that much of the blame for past conditions is put on the minister. Before committing this injustice it is well to

consider one or two things. The average minister has more than met the expectations of his laymen. What is lacking in the minister can often be accounted for by the standards of his laymen. The lay members and officers will get about what they really demand of the ministry and in general they have not wanted an efficient church. It meant too high a cost for them to pay in conduct and money. Christianity in too many cases has meant a soul-saving affair for eternity, but it was not allowed to affect the concerns of to-day in a very vital way. Too often the laymen would not serve, so the minister did most of what had to be done. Thus he had no time left for teaching and training. The ministry will take its share of the blame, but some of it must be put elsewhere.

THE TREASURER

All that has been said concerning the training and selection of elders and stewards applies more or less to the other officers of the church. The treasurer needs to have some simple system of account keeping and to be trained to keep the records so that the reports to the church can be made with promptness and accuracy. The follow-up work with the subscribers can so be done by assistants

as to produce a growth in the life as well as in the financial affairs of the church.

MATERIALS

Record books, pledge cards, double pocket envelopes, loose leaf subscribers' payment records, statement blanks, tracts upon simple processes and fundamental truths can be procured promptly and cheaply from the various denominational publishing houses and other like establishments. The Every Member Canvass should be an annual occurrence in every church and ample literature can be secured from many sources to outline the plans and procedure.

HAVE A PLAN

Have a definite system adapted to the needs of your particular case, letting the system be true to the fundamental requirements of the principles "every member a contributor of record," and "every contributor separating a portion of his income for God's purpose to be paid weekly and covering in its objectives the whole round of world enterprises carried on in Christ's name." Then encourage farther the giving of occasional or "over all" gifts as a thank offering. The treasurer needs to be trained

to see that giving is worship. He must be trained so as to be able to train others. For instance stress has been laid for some years past upon systematic giving. We must continue to emphasize the necessity for regularity in the act of stewardship, but the time has now come when of necessity we must emphasize also proportionate giving. System without proper proportion is futile. God has the first and greatest claim on our life and generosity. To give Him five cents every week and spend a dollar for candy is to mock Him almost beyond redemption, because the giving is not in any just proportion to other expenditures. Only a trained mind can train others in such important matters.

THE SPIRITUAL VIEW-POINT

All officers responsible for the financial affairs of a church need to get the Christ view-point concerning the individual and money. "How much does he give?" is the question too often asked, because the giving is rated on the basis of the amount paid in. That is the wrong basis. In the case of the widow, Christ viewed the whole matter from the standpoint of what she had left after her giving was over. It was wonderful giving even if only two mites reached the treasury,

because when the act had taken place nothing was left in her possession. Such a viewpoint would avoid many a difficulty in the modern church.

WORKING THE PLAN

A proper plan which included a spiritual . Every Member Canvass with the above teaching prominently brought out, and then worked from the top to the very last member of the church would revolutionize its life. The hope for the future rests upon a trained treasurer to lead in working the plan in a thorough, Christlike way. The pastor will be back of the processes of training the leader and also back of every plan made.

THE CLERK

The clerk and his assistants will need a simple parish registry, some stationery and envelopes (a supply of which will also be given the minister at the charge of the church) and some blanks for the dismissal of members to other parishes. A good form of dismissal is shown in the previous chapter.

CARD INDEX CASE

Every parish should also furnish the clerk with a card index and sufficient cards to

allow one for each name on the church roll. The postage bill for all church correspondence for both pastor and clerk should be paid by the church.

MANNER OF SELECTION

The clerk and treasurer should be elected annually and should be continued in office so long as they can furnish an efficient service to the organization.

CHURCH MUSIC

The chorister or organist should be elected annually and a professional contract given them for the term of service which should state clearly the duties they are to perform and the compensation they are to receive. Sufficient money should also be provided these officers, or the committee in charge of the music, so that music in sufficient variety can be procured. Cheap and flashy music is a detriment to the service of worship. Good music is a great help in raising the tone of worship. The value of a children's choir, even for subsidiary service, is quite large and even a small organization should provide training of this sort for all the children who can sing.

THE HEAD USHER

The head usher should be given official standing and therefore be elected by the church at the annual election of officers. After experience has been acquired the next most important duty is to train a corps of assistants. To this end the minister will coöperate so that in the service of worship military precision will be observed in the taking up of the offering. In order to avoid the awkward situation of an usher going forward, thinking the worshipper was following him to the seat to be assigned, only to find that he had dropped into a back pew, the usher should always ask, "May I seat you in the front of the church or would you prefer a seat towards the rear?" This is not necessary with the regular worshipper whose seat is known.

UNUSED CHURCH ASSETS

In connection with the selection and training of church officers in general, let this chapter conclude by drawing attention to the fact that many a church possesses in its membership great men of proven capacity in the business world and of fine Christian character. But the organization they belong to as servants of Christ has been a startling ex-

hibition of everything it should not be from a business standpoint. The personal character of the man has not been an asset in the life of the church any more than his business powers of organization and leadership have been assets in the church's outreach into the community. The church must use its lay leadership assets, from this time on, for the ends that Christ had in view when He projected His church. Undeveloped, unutilized powers of lay leadership constitute a large part of the assets of the local church.

IV

THE CHURCH UNIT

THE ORIGINAL UNIT

FROM the standpoint of a church official the first great need is to have a unit that can be dealt with and for which plans can be made that will cover every one of its needs and opportunities in all departments. Such a unit can be found in the church as originally projected by its Divine Founder.

UNORGANIZED

The church of to-day has very many parts with the result that we have a multiplicity of organizations within the unit but no real organization of the life and forces of the whole church. I am not advocating the necessity of lessening the various organized segments; that is another question which cannot be considered here. The church unit, however, must be so organized that it can function in a simple and direct way as a unit in all the

great essential things of the Kingdom of God.

TWO MINISTRIES

The start must be made at the top in connection with the ministry life of the church. Every one whose physical standard is normal has two arms. The church is the body of Christ, and hence it also must have two arms or ministries. There will be first the Ministry of the Word and then the Ministry of Fellowship participated in by all the lay members. The church body will be well developed, healthy and normal in proportion as the two arms or ministries fulfill their intended functions in it. There is ample work in the world to be done and the church has ample man power with which to do it all. The larger the church the greater is the need for lay participation if the task is to be accomplished. But even in the smallest church the need of service is just as apparent. Only by doing is the soul of the laity to live and grow in the likeness of Christ who said to a layman long ago, "This do and thou shalt live."

A GREAT MISTAKE

Several times I have laid emphasis upon

the necessity of a church officer giving all his time and attention to filling one office in a worth-while way. Here is an illustration of a condition met so often that emphasis must be laid upon it or disaster will follow both to the church and member. Not long ago I made an analysis of the official and working life of a good sized church. I took a large sheet of light coloured wrapping paper, ruled it in wide parallel columns and then at the head of each column put the name of the department or activity and underneath were written down the names of all officers and workers employed therein. The name of one man loomed up seven times and one woman appeared six times. Amongst other things the man was a deacon, church treasurer and Sunday School superintendent. He was spoiling three good opportunities for service when he would certainly have succeeded in demonstrating his ability for effective leadership in any one of the offices. In the meanwhile about seventy per cent. of the members of the church were doing nothing. Imagine if you can an officer in our army occupying at one and the same time the positions of captain, paymaster and chaplain. Or imagine in a commercial institution one man trying to be salesman,

factory manager and engineer in the boiler-room. It would have to be a very insignificant concern or else it would be headed for failure or an explosion. "But suppose the church is small and has only the one capable man in the membership?" Then use capable women. Or if the office is really a man's task, use the woman temporarily while a young man is being trained for the place. "But if there are no young men to be trained?" Then pray the Lord of the harvest to send you one while you go on using the capable woman. The Lord has answered many such an intercession.

Let no one construe this chapter to be an endorsement of a church unit that consolidates many of the offices or tasks in one person, but let as many individuals as is possible share the responsibilities and work of the church.

THE MINISTER

The pastor must be related to the whole church and to every department in it. He is the general manager as well as the under-shepherd of the flock. He must have the united support of the whole organization as long as he is pastor and of good character. The church should honour him for his work's

sake whether or not some individuals like him. From God's money he should be paid regularly and with due liberality. This is not always done. Recently I have been in four churches where for sixteen, fifteen, eight and six years respectively the salary of the minister has not been changed. That is a disgrace to any church of Jesus Christ and in particular to its officers. In addition to his salary the minister should be furnished with a house. His telephone should be paid for by the church, as well as his expense for stationery and postage. It is also a profitable thing to furnish him with an automobile and then make a monthly allowance for its upkeep. This conserves the time and energy of the most valuable life in the possession of the church unit. It is the duty of the whole official family to see that such things are cared for properly in connection with the pastor.

A CHURCH UNITED COMMITTEE

In every church there should be a group representative of every phase of activity and all official life within the organization. Within that group will be the pastor. A deacon should also be in it to represent the lay spiritual officary; often the chairman of

that board is the man unless he happens to be a nominal and inactive head. A deaconess should represent her phase of church activity. Then the superintendent of the Bible School, the church treasurers, the clerk, the president of the women's organized work, the president of the young people's organization, the chorister and finally the chairman of the board of trustees. Often it is asked why the board of elders or stewards will not cover this need. It might do so provided the Bible School superintendent was in that official group as well as the head of the women's organized work.

The spiritual dynamic, the solid impact of the whole church should find itself within this church united committee. Such a unifying agency is greatly needed in the life of the local church. Less than one-third of the churches now have it. No great progress will be made till it has been established. No executive functions will belong to the group, but planning in a correlating way for all the fundamental necessities of the church life will be done so that every department will be in coöperation with all others.

A SOLID ADVANCE

The plans which are made will be from

the view-point of the whole unit. The young people's department may have a surplus of workers while the Bible School may be at a standstill for lack of them. This will be adjusted. The women's organized work may contain most of the intelligent spiritual missionary force of the church but their powers have been largely limited in their outreach to that one segment of the church. If the church is ever to become truly missionary such a force must be utilized in other branches of the church life. This united committee will plan for that. Quite frequently the Sunday School superintendent elected by the school has often been made to feel that the church unit is not interested in his work because the school must man its own classes and must finance itself separately and apart from the church. The Bible School, which is the church at the work of teaching and training, will find its right place in that unit.

DEPARTMENTAL STRENGTH

No one department will be lessened in its powers or opportunities but all will be helped and enlarged by the consciousness that as a part of the whole the total force of the entire organization is back of them. . .

EDUCATION

There will be a unified educational plan covering every pedagogical need of the whole church. In every church a Board of Education should be set up composed of members of the church united committee. Fundamental truths will be taught in their proper place and will be related to all that develops thereafter in other parts of the church. In many cases now one department of the church may be teaching the children stewardship, and that giving is worship and a vital necessity to the maintenance of a spiritual life, while another department of the same church is outraging every phase of such truth by throwing the same children into some scheme for grabbing money or gaining it by illegal commercial transactions. With a fundamental plan for the education of the whole church such a travesty would not be possible.

THE FUTURE CHURCH

The church of the future is to be found amongst the children in the congregation of this day. Ofttimes in the past we have neglected to teach them fundamental truths and practices, but have exploited them for various agencies of the communion. Much mission money has been dragged out of the

children and others in the church without regard to the spiritual equivalent that should always be put back into a life from whence came the money. A void in the life is a spot of danger.

HOW WE LOSE SOULS

Missions and money have meant the same thing to them and they did not want to give money, so they grew up with a dislike for missions. From such causes have come an appalling loss of child life to the churches. In their earlier years the children have come to the Bible Schools and a large per cent. of them have gone through the various grades without finding Christ and a Christian life. Many others have come into membership in the church without fundamental truth and habits that would establish the life. I will not give you statistics here but urge that you discover for yourself the conditions in your own local church during the past years.

CROSSED WIRES

The children of many a church are subjected to treatment that is both unscientific and dangerous. Look at this sample case. Mr. Sunday School Specialist comes to-day and deals with the children establishing

Five Missionary Minutes in the opening exercises of the school. On Tuesday Miss or Mrs. Missions makes them a visit and some of the same children get a second presentation of the missionary subject. On another day soon after that Mr. Young People's Worker comes in the interests of his specialty and uses the missionary vehicle to get a hold on some of the same group of children. Perhaps during the week there is a Junior Society to which most of them belong and at its meeting the pastor or some one else makes a missionary presentation. The specialists have not correlated their teaching, no coöperation is found in the denominational structure which has tended to unify the fundamental ideas back of the varied presentations and nowhere is there any agency that sees to it that missionary foundations are laid so plainly and so securely that all of the subsequent structure will be created upon a wise foundation. So the varied pieces of cultivation have been presented in such an unrelated fashion as to leave doubt and confusion in the mind of the children.

ACTION NEEDED

"Oh, but good was intended," some one says. That may be quite true but it is poor

consolation in the face of a child hopelessly confused and then often lost to the cause in the resultant confusion. If there is a fundamental principle underlying the missionary program of Christ there is a right way and a right time to plan to present it and for that purpose every agency outside the church and every department within the church should combine to do the right thing in the right way; for a lost world still waits for the Saviour Jesus Christ.

A PLANNED PROCESS

The plan of education in stewardship, in missions, and for service would be related to all the pedagogical processes, to all the fundamental truths, to the experimental and inspirational phases and to functions and habits of the soul life so that every member in every department of the local organization would be profited. We must not leave anything to chance when the future of a world is at stake. Beginning with the new-born soul every member of the church, under the direction of its officials, would be properly educated in essentials and in the Bible School and Young People's work, all, whether members or not, being subjected to proper processes. A simple illustration from actual life will serve

to show the necessity for a fundamental process that will include all the church life in its operation.

AN ILLUSTRATION

George was the fifteen-year-old son of an old-fashioned deacon, in an old method church. To that church there came as pastor an up-to-date young minister. He found it slow work changing from old to proper methods. Soon he led George to Christ and amongst other things read him the church covenant or discipline and told him he must read his Bible regularly, pray each day, attend the house of public worship and give of his allowance of money each week for the support of the local church and for missions. Also that he must do something constantly to tell other people about Christ. The lad started off splendidly and ran well for several months. The pastor began to note some irregularities. When approached, the lad was close mouthed and would give no reason why his interest lagged and the conduct was not kept up to the original standard. Finally, a missionary came to visit that pastor and his stories of the far-away land drew the lad to the missionary. Then with the prompting of the pastor the visitor

wisely used a probe. Boiled down this was the lad's statement: "Yes, the pastor did tell him and he started out to do the needed things as told to him." But one night several months later his father deacon had several other deacons to dinner. During the meal they discussed the church in the presence of the lad and it came out that of sixteen deacons only five of them gave to church support with any regularity. The lad's father was not one of the five who gave. Moreover he "did not believe in missions." Psychologically a good start was interrupted and instead a good start in a wrong direction had begun, for sooner or later the lad would most likely be found doing what the deacons and his father were doing rather than keeping up to what the pastor told him to do. Two weeks later his mother asked him to do an errand for her. After school he was to come to the church where he would find her at a women's meeting. He was obliged to wait a little while, so sat within hearing of the women for half an hour while they discussed these facts, that half the church seldom or never came to public worship, only about one-third of the membership gave any money for the support of the local church, and one out of ten of their number contributed to

missions. Soon the lad departed upon the errand with much more seed sown in him to produce a correct psychological result in due season. His mind worked in this way : " My father and other deacons do not give, then I do not have to do so. It is just the minister's job to tell me I must but —— " His money that week went into the movies and his girl friend instead of into the church envelope. On a Sunday night he found some of the other boys going to call on a girl at the hour of evening worship. " Two-thirds of the church and my deacon father amongst them stay away so I guess I will go with the boys to-night. " He went. But for the loving eye of the pastor the lad would have gone the long way of many another soul with the name on the church roll but his life beyond the ken of the divine organization.

THE OLD-FASHIONED DEACON

Later on, the lad's experience was used as a lever with his deacon father and amongst others he, now, helps to instruct all the newcomers in the walk with God. He can do it because he has changed his old-fashioned course and has been trained to understand why missions and giving are fundamental in every Christian life as well as a regular wor-

ship habit. At last accounts the lad was heading for world service in Christ's name.

The whole church life must be built upon the fundamental truths correctly taught throughout all the church, in order to produce the same standards in old or new member, in private or officer. An educational board appointed from the members of the church united committee will soon bring this to pass in a modernized church.

SUBSIDIARY ORGANIZATIONS

It needs to be finally emphasized in this connection that the departmental activities and organizations are to be strongly maintained and adequately developed but so correlated and worked coöperatively that when one department is doing a piece of work it is in deed and truth the whole church at work. Nothing that has been written here or elsewhere is to be interpreted in the light of advice to eliminate any part of the organized life of the local church. Many women fear that modern church processes will banish their organized work in that sphere. Such a fear need not be entertained for one moment. The women's organized work in the local church must be made

stronger and more effective through correlation and coöperation.

A HEAD FOR THE BODY

In its official life the pastor will always be recognized as the undershepherd and general manager of the whole church. No pastor is perfect. All will lack some one or more needed qualifications or gifts. What he thus lacks, it is the duty of the officials to provide in some one or more of their personalities or qualifications, so that the sum total of the official personalities and qualifications will present to the work all that is needed to do all of it in a victorious way. If the pastor was perfect he would be with God and not at work with other imperfect creatures.

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE

That there is a definite relation between the child life in the church of to-day and the future church we cannot for one moment doubt. We must therefore develop lay leaders for the church of to-morrow. We must begin now to do this developing and training work with the children in the life of the church. Almost every soul has within a latent power of leadership along some line. The leaders of to-day must address them-

selves to the task of drawing out the leaders that must take their places to-morrow. The ministry will in the future give themselves very largely to the training and developing work with their officers.

A TRAINED MINISTRY

At the same time there must come a great change in the preparation given the minister for his life-work. In the past he has been thoroughly educated, but not properly trained in the technical task of church management and work. When the lay leaders demand, in an adequate way, that the theological schools shall both train and educate their student body, it will be done, provided they furnish the needed money and set the institution free from the traditions of past ages

LOSING THE RECRUITS

From the unified view-point the local church must not only secure converts or new-born souls, but those babes in Christ must not be allowed to die of neglect or weak management in the midst of the household of faith. So the milk of the Word will be fed to the babes and meanwhile the organization will have restored a sense of discipline. Without discipline there can be no real

household. We must not think of discipline as punitive but as corrective. The church of to-day must have discipline.

THE CHRIST UNIT

The task of the church must be viewed from the standpoint of the divine unit projected by Christ. When any segment of that unit in pursuance of the plan of the whole projects itself upon the world, it must not be a small blow here and another there by a little segment, not a succession of small blows, but one great impact because behind it is the whole force of the whole church doing a piece of planned work in a prepared way, with every power projected to secure the desired result for our Master Christ.

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